



DOJ amendment of federal execution protocol opens way for firing squads, gassing, hanging

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The US Department of Justice quietly **amended its execution protocols** Friday, dropping the requirement to carry out federal death sentences by lethal injection and clearing the way to use other methods, including firing squads, poison gas, hanging and electrocution. The amended rule, published in the Federal Register, specifically allows the US government to conduct executions by lethal injection or use “any other manner prescribed by the law of the state in which the sentence was imposed.”

Several states **allow alternative methods of execution**, including electrocution, nitrogen gas inhalation, or death by firing squad. Currently, nine states permit execution by electrocution, seven by lethal gas, three by hanging, and three by firing squad. Federal law still stipulates that the execution manner must correspond with what the state where the execution takes place permits. If a state does not permit the death penalty in the jurisdiction a defendant is convicted, a judge can

<https://www.jurist.org/news/2020/11/doj-amends-federal-execution-protocols-expanding-execution-methods/>

designate a different state to carry out the execution under the authority of the federal government.

Previously, executions by the federal government only occurred in federal penitentiaries. However, the new rule change also allows for state facilities to carry out executions.

The federal government **carried out its first execution in 17 years** in July. Currently, five people are **scheduled** for execution before President-elect Joe Biden is sworn in, and the recently promulgated rules cannot go into effect until December 24, 2020. Most political experts believe the new rules will be short-lived as Biden is **opposed** to the death penalty and has vowed to eliminate it on the federal level.